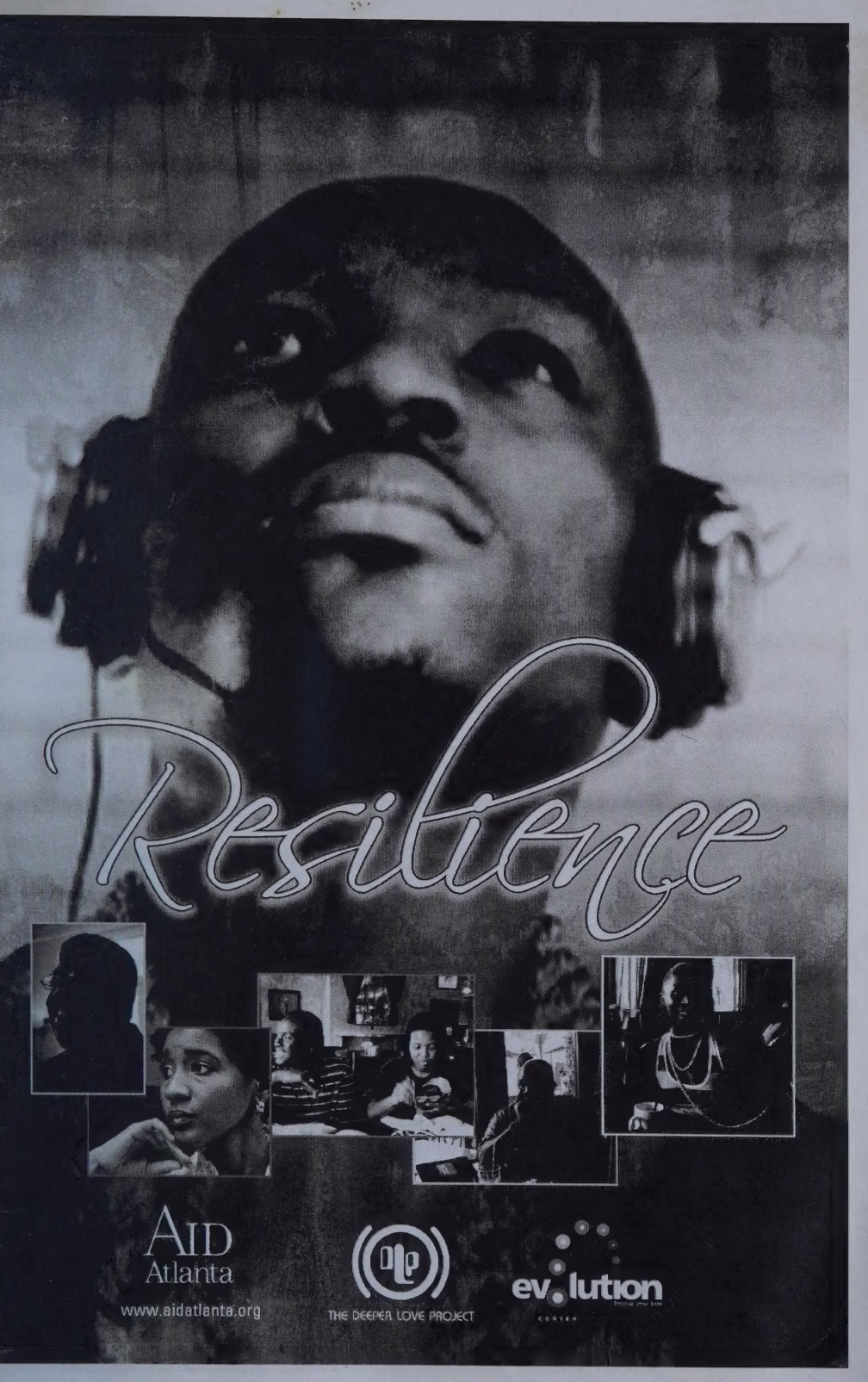
Resilience
AID
Atlanta
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THE DEEPER LOVE PROJECT
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LGBT Youth of Color Project

A program of AID Atlanta, the LGBT Youth of Color Project was created with the support of Advocates for Youth to provide leadership development, sexual health education, and empowerment to Atlanta area queer youth of color. The overall goal of the project is to identify, cultivate, support and empower LGBTQ youth of color to become leaders in their communities around issues of HIV prevention as they are impacted by homophobia and racism.

The program brought together 7 outstanding youth from various Atlanta institutions and organizations such as Emory University, Georgia State University, Spark Reproductive Justice, Spelman College, AID Atlanta and the Evolution Center. These emerging leaders were selected due to their demonstrated commitment and service to their communities. Over the course of 7 months the fellows participated in 7 advocacy and leadership trainings on topics ranging from Public Policy to Self Care. Upon completion of their trainings members were provided with small grants to design and implement their own advocacy projects. The resulting projects were innovative and impactful.

LGBT Youth of Color Project

Jeshawna Wholley

Jeshawna is a graduating senior Comparative Women's Studies major at Spelman College where she is active on campus. For the past three years, she has served as President of Afrekete, Spleman's only organization that fosters the LGBTQIQ community on campus. She also volunteers as the director of programming for Just Us Girls, Inc., a non-profit organization that serves as a mentorship program for adolescent and teenage girls. Jeshawna's identification as a Black Lesbian Woman has served as her personal motivation for her political endeavors. Her sincere love for women and commitment to her community (mixed with her "flower child" tendencies), make her role at the forefront of the social justice movement seem inevitable. As she puts it, she is dedicated to "making the revolution irresistible," and she loves every moment of it. In the future, she plans on becoming a consultant for non-profit organizations in an effort to secure the longevity of their mission.

Jeshawna used her grant to host a sexual/sexuality health workshop for the queer identified community on Spelman's campus. Her goal was to create a space where queer women could come together to talk about queer sex and safe ways to engage in it. She wanted participants to walk away feeling knowledgeable and empowered around their sex and sexuality.

On November 11th, 2010, the fourth day of Spelman's second annual PRIDE week, she hosted the Queer Safe Sex Workshop (a sex-positive somatic sex workshop). Topics discussed were STIs, Risk Reduction, safe (but sexy) ways to use barriers during sex, and different "non-traditional" sexualities. The workshop was a great success and attracted over 30 queer-identified women.

LGBT Youth of Color Project

Onyekachi Ekeogu

Onyeckachi begin her road to resilience many years ago. Starting at a young age, she was determined to see the endless possibilities that this world had to offer. She believed in the imagination and the ability to make dreams a reality. Those beliefs of her childhood continue to be a foundation in her journey throughout life. Inspired by authors like Audre Lorde and Alice Walker, Onyekachi understood the complexities of being a member of multiple minority groups. As a teen she received many accolades and awards for her outstanding academic performance and leadership in high school. A senior at Georgia State University, Onyeckachi has been working with the members of Black OUT to create an aware and oppression-free society. She is the current leader of continuing the legacy of BlackOUT. Her current field of study is the critical and analytical work done on the criminal justice system. She aspires to doing restorative justice work with a local grassroots law office.

The My SWAG Project, the Solution to Warding Away Germs, is a progressive effort by BlackOUT, the black queer organization on the GSU campus, with help from Sister Love Inc. and AID Atlanta that focuses on the elimination of sexual health ignorance among youth and young adult women of color in the LGBT community. My SWAG attempted to reach the population of women (biological and trans women) ages 13-26. The participants of the events gained information about the many kinds of intercourse available for LGBT women to participate in, ways to address sex and sexuality in different situations, and learned facts about STIs, HIV and germs that could be contracted by not using barriers during intercourse. Participants received information on where they could receive HIV/STI testing and counseling and treatment.

LGBT Youth of Color Project

Chase Andrews

Chase Andrews is a 24 year old, Atlanta native and a recent graduate of Georgia State University. He holds a Bachelors of Arts in Communication with a minor in Psychology. He's is the former Program Coordinator for the Department of Student Health Promotion at his alma mater. He got his start as a peer health educator in 2005, from there his interest in health education and HIV prevention blossomed. In August of 2010, he joined the AID Atlanta staff as the Recruitment and Retention Specialist for the Evolution Project. When he's not doing HIV prevention work he's an aspiring filmmaker. In 2009 he started a small production company, Eight Peace Productions, LLC. He's currently working on short film entitled: Emotionally Safe Sex: Beyond Barrier Methods. Ultimately, Chase aims to combine his passion for LGBT youth, HIV prevention, and film to create provocative media/art.

With the grant he received from the project Chase, created a LGBT Youth of Color Lounge at the host hotel during Atlanta's 2010 Black Gay Pride. The purpose of the LGBT Youth of Color Lounge was to create a relaxed, fun space for LGBT Youth of Color to convene, network, and obtain resources. The event attracted close to 100 participants. Participants engaged in a number of games, topical discussions and activities. Each participant was provided with sexual-health information, a list of resources for HIV and STI testing and ways of getting involved in advocacy.

LGBT Youth of Color Project

Raphael Coleman

Raphael Coleman is a fellow for the Office of Health Promotion at Emory University Student Health and Counseling Services. He has been involved in health advocacy and research for the past 2 years and recently received a BS in Neuroscience and Behavioral Biology from Emory College. He plans to continue his studies to pursue an MPH in Behavioral Sciences with the ultimate goal of obtaining a PhD in a public health concentration. His inspiration stems from his volunteer work with the LGBT office at Emory and his numerous opportunities to network and connect with advocates and professionals in the community. As a fairly new advocate and professional dedicated to the fight against HIV/AIDS and other STDs/STIs he has a major interest in studying and developing innovative ecological interventions to help minimize health disparities.

Raphael used his funding to convene a townhall discussion entitled "The State of HIV/AIDS at Emory 2010". The purpose of this event was to make members of the Emory Community, especially students, aware of the socio-politico-cultural history of HIV/AIDS and the incredible role that Emory is playing in all aspects of HIV/AIDS research and policy, by presenting them with a keynote address delivered by Dean James Curran of the Rollins School of Public Health. His presentation framed a panel discussion that opened dialogue between members of the Emory community and professionals from various backgrounds who are involved in HIV/AIDS research and policy.

A Short History of the Rustin Lorde Breakfast

The Rustin Lorde Breakfast was founded in 2002 by Craig Washington then executive director at the Atlanta Gay and Lesbian Center and Darlene Hudson who was a Board member. Washington had been a member of the Martin Luther King Jr March planning committee and knew that the March was very welcoming to lgbt attendees. Given this receptivity to lgbt people and the Center's proximity to the line- up site, he and Darlene decided that a breakfast event would resonate well with many. It would also help to secure a distinctive role for the Center. They named the community breakfast after the most well known gay associated with the civil rights movement, Bayard Rustin, principal organizer of the 1963 March on Washington and a mentor/advisor to Martin Luther King Jr. In 2008, at the behest of Mary Anne Adams, the name of Audre Lorde was incorporated to symbolize the indispensible roles of women in social justice movements. The event would not have been possible were it not for the support of key founding sponsors Radial Café, Atlanta Gay and Lesbian Center, Positive Impact, AIDS Survival Project, EM Designs Group, ZAMI, Congregation Bet Haverim, In The Life Atlanta, Southern Voice, Human Rights Campaign, Unity Fellowship, and Starbucks.

Bayard Audre Martin

WELCOME FROM THE 2011 RUSTIN/LORDE PLANNING TEAM

We are elated to welcome you to the 10th annual Bayard Rustin Audre Lorde Breakfast. "We who believe in freedom" recognize the importance of traditions that ensure we stay connected in our commitment to liberation and our very survival. The work of social action and the labor of enduring multiple oppressions often takes an invisible toll. We need restoration and recreation that cannot be generated by emails or tweets. For those of us who are transgender, bisexual, lesbian, gay, queer, intersex, questioning—for the woman, the brown skinned, the physically challenged, isolation and silence kills, fellowship and expression sustains. Today we gather, we speak, we eat so that we may live. The Rustin Lorde breakfast has grown from an event to a cherished tradition to which we look forward every year!

We mark this 10th year of the Rustin Lorde Breakfast by celebrating our strengths. The theme for this year's Rustin Lorde Breakfast is ***resilience***, the ability to endure, the will to bounce back, the act of adaptation, the art of improvisation, rebirth, and renewal. It is our "deeper love", what Aretha describes as "the power that gives you the strength to survive." For every legend, there are others whose acts of radical love, courage and brilliance are not the stuff of history yet are recorded in precious memories and passed down generations through our storytelling. By these testimonies we recognize that queer excellence is cultivated by communities- mentors, friends, lovers, "gay " or "house" mothers and fathers, biological parents and teachers who set standards for us and challenge us to meet or surpass them. We must acknowledge the efforts of our unsung as well as our heroes to comprehend our own potential. Resilience is by no means the exclusive trait of the extraordinary figures we tend to celebrate. Knowing this we share our own strengths and victories with each other submitting evidence that blunts our doubts and re-ignites our will to act.

The 2011 Rustin Lorde Breakfast will highlight our work toward HIV prevention justice and gender justice particularly for those who are transgender. This year we invite you will learn as you teach, seek and give guidance, commit your time in a new way, and most importantly to show love and be loved by somebody, as you enjoy all the good food and warm company. When we prepare to show up at the edge of each other's battles we form a mighty wave. We make a revolution. We are so excited, so thankful that you are Here where love is not only the message, it is the revolutionary act!

10th Annual Atlanta Bayard Rustin/Audre Lorde Breakfast

Monday, January 17, 2011 10am-1pm

St. Marks United Methodist Church

Welcome

Greetings from the Hope Clinic

Circle of Resilience -- A Fishbowl Discussion

Inspirational Reflection

Sharing Our Strengths - Group Discussions

Closing and Preparing for the MLK March

Radial Café, AID Atlanta, AIDS Survival Project, Atlanta Gay and Lesbian Center, Atlanta Pride Committee, Congregation Bet Haverim, EM Designs Group, Flying Biscuit, Human Rights Campaign, In The Life Atlanta, Positive Impact, Southern Voice, Starbucks, Unity Fellowship and ZAMI

SPARK is a statewide community based and centered reproductive justice organization based in Atlanta, GA. Their Mission is to collaborate with individuals and communities to build and sustain a powerful reproductive justice movement in Georgia. They do this by: Developing and sharing a radical analysis in order to shift culture; Mobilize in response to immediate threats and; Organize for long term systemic change

Spark RJ used their grant to support their Fierce Youth Reclaiming & Empowering (FYRE) project. FYRE seeks to support and build the leadership and power of LGBTQ youth and allies in Georgia. The project uses coalition building, political education, resource development, art and social media. Their main initiative is an art/ resource zine entitled FIRE: SPARKING THE FLAMES IN EACH OTHER. This work is documented and shared through our interactive website that utilizes social media such as Facebook, twitter, photography, and writing. The website serves as our online presence informing the people we serve of upcoming leadership opportunities and current events.

Poetry is Not a Luxury

Audre Lorde

The quality of light by which we scrutinize our lives has direct bearing upon the product which we live, and upon the changes which we hope to bring about through those lives. It is within this light that we form those ideas by which we pursue our magic and make it realized. This is poetry as illumination, for it is through poetry that we give name to those ideas which are, until the poem, nameless and formless-about to be birthed, but already felt. That distillation of experience from which true poetry springs births thought as dream births concept, as feeling births idea, as knowledge births (precedes) understanding.

As we learn to bear the intimacy of scrutiny, and to flourish within it, as we learn to use the products of that scrutiny for power within our living, those fears which rule our lives and form our silences begin to lose their control over us.

For each of us as women, there is a dark place within where hidden and growing our true spirit rises, "Beautiful and tough as chestnut/stanchions against our nightmare of weakness" and of impotence.

These places of possibility within ourselves are dark because they are ancient and hidden; they have survived and grown strong through darkness. Within these deep places, each one of us holds an incredible reserve of creativity and power, of unexamined and unrecorded emotion and feeling. The woman's place of power within each of us is neither white nor surface; it is dark, it is ancient, and it is deep.

When we view living, in the european mode, only as a problem to be solved, we then rely solely upon our ideas to make us free, for these were what the white fathers told us were precious.

But as we become more in touch with our own ancient, black, non-european view of living as a situation to be experienced and interacted with, we learn more and more to cherish our feelings, and to respect those hidden sources of our power from where true knowledge and therefore lasting action comes.

At this point in time, I believe that women carry within ourselves the possibility for fusion of these two approaches as keystone for survival, and we come closest to this combination in our poetry. I speak here of poetry as the revelation or distillation of experience, not the sterile word play that, too often, the white fathers distorted the word poetry to mean - in order to cover their desperate wish for imagination without insight.

For women, then, poetry is not a luxury. It is a vital necessity of our existence. It forms the quality of the light within which we predicate our hopes and dreams toward survival and change, first made into language, then into idea, then into more tangible action.

Langston Hughes'
Mother to Son

Well, son, I'll tell you:
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.
It's had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor --
Bare.
But all the time
I'se been a-climbin' on,
And reachin' landin's,
And turnin' corners,
And sometimes goin' in the dark
Where there ain't been no light.
So boy, don't you turn back.
Don't you set down on the steps
'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.
Don't you fall now --
For I'se still goin', honey,
I'se still climbin',
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair